

**BOLOGNA THEMATIC PEER GROUP C ON QUALITY ASSURANCE  
THIRD MEETING**

**Ghent (Belgium), 16-17 January 2020**

Minutes

**List of participants**

<b>Family Name</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Delegation</b>
Messas	Linda	AEC
Pustina	Linda	Albania
Gyulazyan	Varduhi	Armenia
Petersen	Jürgen	Austria
Betenya	Elena	Belarus
De Bourdeaudhuij	Ilse	Belgium Flemish Community
De Decker	Frederik	Belgium Flemish Community
Van den Bosch	Patrick	Belgium Flemish Community
Scott	Dora	Belgium Flemish Community
Soenen	Magalie	Belgium Flemish Community
Vanruysseveldt	Vicky	Belgium Flemish Community
Ioimo	Clarissa	BFUG Secretariat
Kahani Subashi	Edlira Adi	BFUG Secretariat
Boris	Stefanov	Bulgaria
Dragojevic	Durdica	Croatia
Papoulas	Andreas	Cyprus
Vidlakova	Martina	Czech Republic
Gonge	Kevin	Denmark
Homan	Milja	ENQA
Jasper	Anthony	ENQA
Kelo	Maria	ENQA
Szabo	Melinda	EQAR
Grodecki	Jakub	ESU
Loukkola	Tia	EUA
Viliunas	Vaidotas	EURASHE
Engels-Perenyi	Klara	European Commission

Bollaert	Lucien	External Expert
Delplace	Stefan	External Expert
Goedert	Marie-Jo	France
Pisarz	Solange	France
Margishvili	Lasha	Georgia
Mayer-Lantermann	Katrin	Germany
Sinóros-Szabó	Laura	Hungary
Vidarsdottir	Una	Iceland
Cioffi	Alberto	Italy
Mallia	Gabriella	Malta
Chiciuc	Andrei	Moldova
Guvir	Stela	Moldova
Velisco	Nadejda	Moldova
Kavedzic	Milica	Montenegro
Aleksov	Borco	North Macedonia
Brdulak	Jakub	Poland
Sin	Cristina	Portugal
Ghitulica	Cristina	Romania
Iordan	Petrescu	Romania
Ispas	Daniela-Mihaela	Romania
Dinescu	Madalina	Romania
Stefanescu	Oana Maria	Romania
Cvetkovski	Tatjana	Serbia
Ondreicka	Peter	Slovakia
Van Bruggen	Lineke	The Netherlands
Elmas	Muzaffer	Turkey

Apologies from Bosnia and Herzegovina, EI-IE, EUA, Greece, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, UNESCO, United Kingdom (Scotland).

## 1. Welcome address by the 3 co-chairs of the peer group.

**The Belgium Flemish Community Co-chair** opened the meeting, by welcoming all the participants. She brought greetings and apologies from the General Director of the Ministry of Education and Training of the Flemish Community, who was not able to attend the meeting, due to his last day at work in the mentioned position. The Cyprus and Georgia Co-chairs welcomed the participants and thanked the Belgium Flemish Community Co-chair for organising the meeting. The chair proposed some slight changes to the agenda. No other participants had any proposals, so the agenda was adopted. The participants were informed that the meeting would be recorded by the BFUG Secretariat, and that the keynote presentations would be also video recorded. There was no objection to the information given.

## 2. Keynote “Ghent University’s Self-directed Quality Assurance system 2.0” by the Education Director of Ghent University.

Participants were introduced to the topic of the establishment of the QA system at Ghent University, which started following the government decision to change the external QA requirement from a regular programme level accreditation to institutional audit, thus leaving each HEI to establish their own quality system and culture. **Ilse De Bourdeaudhuij**, Director of Educational Policy of Ghent University, presented the Quality Assurance at Ghent University and its phases of development in the past, nowadays as well as future objectives. In the past Ghent University used to have External Quality Assessments, which brought with time the need to optimise the system, evaluation, mainly due to the new quality code presented by the Belgium Flemish Government in 2008. The current system was developed in 2015 and is called “Evaluation Quality Assurance System 1.0”. After exposing how this new system was created (consultation with faculties were carried out, especially with the portfolios and the involvement of 805 people on the evaluation of the QA system), the main points of concern raised from these consultations focused on portfolios, peer learning visits, support as well as the Education Quality Commission (department of educational policy).

The evaluation pointed out the need of a new QA system. The need for such step was also due to the new quality code for HE in Flanders introduced by the government. The new code emphasized the study program content (internationally up to par and evidence-based, occupational qualification, employability and exit level). Secondly, the new Quality Code requires that strategic choices are visible when looking at study programmes and realised within the HEI, and thirdly, the code emphasizes the importance of the Quality Assurance culture in every study programme. The legislative focus on these three elements should lead to formal QA Resolution (QAR) for all study programmes.

Based on an external evaluation and on the new quality code, the Ghent University developed their new system, presenting it to the board in early 2020. It aims at six strategic education objectives, integration into content, processes and QA system. University developed the tools such as portfolios monitors (share point). All portfolios got a back office and the minutes are published on the system of Ghent University. Each study programme has its own monitor, including the educational policy and QA monitor. Central element in the monitor is the study programme objectives, using the PDCA method. Second point is on QA at faculty level. The QA faculty level is very importance on developing faculty

frameworks, bringing together study programmes and teaching staff, policy pursuit, professional development for teaching staff, coaching, sharing expertise and good practices. They reflect on QA at faculty level and as such keeping in mind also that internationalisation is very important to be developed. 11 faculties of Ghent University are involved on the QA monitor at faculty level. The faculty has a faculty monitor to write down and reflect with the same structure as the study level and the monitoring is carried out on a higher level including also policy level. The third aspect of the new QA system regards how the QAR should be developed. With a retrospective view, there is a need for evolution from control to trust. The aim to reach to a quality culture, with the goal to enable a stamp on each of the HEI study program QA-wise. For this there won't be peer learning visits, only self-reflection. The recommendations are carried out in three steps; screen the programme monitor, pass QAR and public information. There are criteria and timing (2020-2023) set up to reach this goal.

Based on the criteria and time framing, there are three possible outcomes for QAR; positive, positive with specific coaching and negative decision. A professional development catalogue is also foreseen, containing basic and advance offers, blended track, etc. the real difference contains the focusing on professionalisation of teachers and not of the study programmes. With the new system the role of the faculties is strengthened, with the support, coaching, managing the study programmes, establishing a professional track for the faculty teaching staff. To the questions from participants, in regard to the future evaluation of positively evaluated programs, it was mentioned that the evaluation of the monitor will go on and added to the system. There are frequent questionnaires sent out to different stakeholders. As for the negative decision, this means that the program is closed immediately.

### **3. State of play of the peer group, messages from BICG and BFUG, presentation on the peer group projects.**

**The Belgium Flemish Community Co-chair** reported on the state of play of the TPG C on QA: the composition of the group with 47 representatives of BFUG Members and Consultative Members, with a mixture of them coming from both Ministries and QA agencies. Participants were reminded of all the TPG C on QA materials and information, which are published at the EHEA website by the BFUG Secretariat. The Action Plan prepared by each of the countries of the TPG C on QA is also published on the EHEA website. She reiterated that the meeting in Ghent was the last meeting of TPG C on QA, as per ToR, aiming at summarizing 18 months of work of the TPG C on QA, and group's objectives: share outcomes of the work so far of the Bologna peer group, report on the related EU-projects, define further needs for the future. Moreover, the Co-chair emphasized the subthemes for the TPG C on QA: legislative framework in line with the ESG, ensuring effectiveness of internal quality assurance arrangements, including the use of QA results in the decision-making process and quality culture as well as links to learning and teaching, external quality assurance; the role and engagement of stakeholders in QA (students, teachers, employers); cross-border QA; European Approach to accreditation of joint programmes. Then she recalled the aim of the BICG, what has been done so far and informed the participants that the BICG will send a survey to all members of the TPGs to measure the experiences and the impact of the peer support in the countries. She informed the group that the final report should be finalized by end of March 2020 before the BICG and BFUG Board meeting in April 2020 in Lviv, Ukraine. Moreover, during the BFUG

meeting in Split, Croatia in May 2020, the outcomes of the pilot peer support approach will be discussed.

In conclusion, she updated the group on the status of on-going KA3 projects within TPG C on QA. In particular, she recalled the staff mobility project whose main aim is to support the professional development of staff by offering a work placement at another QA agency/ministry/organization. Participants were informed on the results of the two calls in terms of applications and that feedback to all applicants will follow as soon as possible. Italy has asked the Co-chairs to raise the issue of their application for staff mobility with no responses, while they were encouraged to check possibilities with other members. Participants thanked the Co-chairs for their efforts and work carried out, also in regard to the participation in the projects and the peer support, considering 48 EHEA countries giving the message of hope for the future. The feedback to the survey is considered crucial for the future of the TPGs and the work carried out. The important message from all the projects should be carried out on practical steps on national level for each of the members of TPG C on QA.

#### **4. State of play of EUniQ-project.**

**Mark Frederiks**, NVAO (Flemish Community) , presented the EUniQ project which aim is to develop a European Framework for Comprehensive QA of European Universities, selected under the KA1 of Erasmus+ program. There are 17 partners in the project, going from national authorities to HEIs on institutional level. The project produced also a survey, asking the partners on five priorities of strategy and alliances and what are the expectations on the joint provisions. There was a wide spectrum of the feedback, with some alliances being general while some others very specific, such as specific joint programmes and personalised academic curricula. The survey also revealed some obstacles, such as diverse accreditation system and not harmonised regulations among partner countries, differences in the regulations, approaches and timescales of national agencies and differences in the autonomy of universities in each national context. The expected benefits are to help alliances to both define and self-assess their quality, open up a dialogue between QA agencies and European Universities; enabling the assessment of European Universities in an appropriate way, assisting stakeholders' perspectives based on facts and facilitating QA peer support across the EHEA. Next steps include framework for the pilots and selection of experts, analysis of proposed methodology, workshop for panel experts and agency coordinators, analysis of legal issues & ESG, finalised European Framework in January 2021 and organise a dissemination conference in Brussels in spring 2021.

#### **5. World café sessions and parallel sessions**

The Belgium Flemish Community Co-chair informed the participants on the different sessions that would be organised. Firstly, there would be the feedback from staff mobilities/examples of cooperation between countries/good practices in world café style. Each group had an own speaker giving a short input to the group, leaving participants to discuss and share good practice on the chosen topics:

1. External QA and accreditation

2. Incoming and outgoing staff mobility
3. Accreditation on open and distance learning
4. QA system in Flanders.

Each speaker would in turn go along among all groups.

After the world café sessions, a second set of parallel sessions were organised on a number of topics gathered from the participants during the lunch break.

## **6. Presentation of the Effective involvement of stakeholders in external quality assurance activities (ESQA) project and status of stakeholders' involvement in external quality assurance in the quality assurance agencies partners in the project**

The second day of the meeting started with a short summary of the meeting of the previous day as well as an introduction of the items on the agenda of the day.

**Cristina Ghitulica**, Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS), introduced the participants with the project “Effective involvement of stakeholders in external quality assurance activities (ESQA)” and moderated the interventions of the partners, who later explained to the group the status of stakeholders' involvement in External QA. The thematic of the project is one of the subthemes identified by members of the group, with the main objectives being support to the peer learning activities on QA within the Bologna Follow Up Group (BFUG) and the Bologna Process (BP), analysis of stakeholders' expectations towards external quality assurance work and sharing best practices among QAAs', in regard to including stakeholders in EQA activities and ongoing development of practices. It was stressed that the results expected at the end of the project include: bringing important changes in the practices of QA agencies related to stakeholders' involvement, which on long term will result in increased relevance and impact of QA activities in higher education. The three European organizations members in the partnership will reflect the outcomes of the project in their own tools and instruments focused on stakeholders' engagement and communication. Benchmarking and development of recommendations in evaluation activities and the interest of stakeholders' organizations to participate in QA activities will be raised, while they will be empowered to increase engagement and improve participation.

**Jakub Grodecki**, European Student Union (ESU), emphasized how valuable the project has been for the stakeholders involved, as it facilitated a space of understanding, where they could meet one another and develop connections. The main context of these meetings was the diversity of knowledge and perspectives. It also gave them the opportunity for feedback so that stakeholders could better understand their own and the role of others in QA processes. Grodecki reported that by developing the processes and guidelines together, stakeholders were encouraged to take ownership of the results. Furthermore, it allowed for the profile and the needs of stakeholders to become more clearly defined. It was made clear that one of the aims of the project is to empower agencies to participate in more QA activities.

After the general presentation, partners explained the status of stakeholders' involvement in external quality assurance in the quality assurance agencies.

**Kevin Gonge** - the Danish Accreditation Institution, presented the involvement of stakeholders in Denmark. For Denmark, it is crucial to involve stakeholders in order to



increase the transparency and legitimacy, identifying blind spots and improving methodology and process. One of the main struggles is finding a balance between development and control, as this has consequences for institutions. Recent initiatives have been taken to carry out the process, such as developing new guidelines for institutional accreditation with HEIs, coffee-meetings with labour market representatives on a new strategy for thematic analysis projects, establishing a network/discussion forum for organised student bodies on EQA issues and hosting a conference on student-centered learning. In conclusion, the next steps to be taken were planning meetings with labour market representatives and redefining their role – more consulting and collaborative partnerships.

**Solange Pisarz** - High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education in France, illustrated how France is engaging stakeholders. Two paths were taken to ensure accountability: through the Board, named "The College" composed of 30 members (the board represents all relevant groups involved in HE) and through interviews at the parliament. Moreover, to ensure information and transparency it is essential to have an ongoing dialogue with the Rectors Conference, Ministries and with other evaluation structures, as dissemination remains challenging. Furthermore, Hcéres focused on providing training to their experts. They explored the options of training the experts together as well as individually (i.e. separate stakeholder groups). All information can be found on their website, where all reports have been published and made available.

**Stela Guvir** - National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research (Moldova), informed the participants that in Moldova, the Agency's expert evaluators (the stakeholders) are recruited under open competition in a transparent manner through an electronic platform, based on the methodology approved by the Governing Board. The external assessment panel consists of minimum 3 members and includes: representatives of the academic environment, representatives of employers, student representatives and international experts. Despite some difficulties, there are many strengths. These strengths include involvement of international experts in the evaluation of study programs; the positive impact of the involvement of the evaluators in the external assessment panels on the programs / institutions of origin of the expert and working tools that facilitate the process and understanding of the particularities of the study program. Furthermore, all stakeholders are involved in preparing the report. Finally challenges and opportunities have been submitted to the attention of the group.

**Boris Stefanov** - National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency (NEAA) in Bulgaria, introduced the agency. In Bulgaria, the main priorities and outcome are defining the necessary knowledge, skills and competences of the stakeholder's representatives, increasing the requirements for the practically acquired knowledge, skills and competences of the higher education professionals and increasing the capacity for corrective actions to improve the quality assurance system. For Bulgaria, self-evaluation is the main purpose of stakeholder involvement. Conclusively, it has been argued that among the next activities to be implemented, successful involvement of students and other external stakeholders in all NEAA Higher Education Quality Assurance Activities and legal regulation of the stakeholder's involvement in the Higher Education Quality Assurance Activities are foreseen.

**Iordan Petrescu** - Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, in his presentation emphasised that the methodology includes specific provisions for stakeholder

involvement in quality assurance according to all parts of ESG. In particular, stakeholder involvement in external quality assurance include students' federations, the National Rectors' Council, the Teachers' unions, the National HE authority, employers, alumni and Representatives of the Romanian Agency for Quality assurance in Pre-university Education. Despite some obstacles that have been identified, such as lack of sufficient knowledge or experience in higher education of external stakeholders, which at its end makes very difficult their engagement in quality assurance activities on a permanent basis, and lack of specialized staff in HEIs to become more involved and responsible in IQA, the project continues and good results are expected.

**Milja Homan** - ENQA, illustrated the first results of the study related to stakeholders' involvement in external quality assurance activities. After explaining the scope and the objectives of the study, it was stressed that anyone, who directly takes part in it or has the ability to affect the performance of HEIs, should be considered a stakeholder, and therefore relevant for and directly or indirectly involved in QA. It has also been recalled that stakeholders can be internal (university leadership, teachers, researchers, administrators, and students) or external (employers, industry representatives, government or funding agencies, alumni, local/regional governments, media) to HEIs. Good practice examples from Ireland and Armenia were presented, as they responded well to the survey. The first results show some barriers for effective involvement, but at the same time also different successful activities. The group has been informed that the final study will be available online in March 2020 and will be distributed at the Rome Ministerial Conference in June 2020.

Discussions emerging from the presentations identified communication and the training of experts as key issues which could improve cooperation and quality. The experts on the project, Lucien Bollaert and Stefan Delplace, commented briefly that their task is to write guidelines in order to improve practices and information for stakeholders. According to them, the best involvement is the kind where stakeholders can co-create and take co-ownership of the result. Communication between parties is therefore of vital importance. Stakeholders should also actually be informed on the implementation and be rewarded for engaging in discussion groups. The results of discussion surrounding quality assurance is that it can be included in the learning outcomes, which would be to the benefit of stakeholders (who are also employers). Similarly, there are projects that award students for doing QA by giving them extra credits or certificates. The experts emphasized the importance of a win-win situation that benefits both employers and students.

During the discussion it was emphasized that one of the main challenges experienced by all participants is that the involvement of employers in the project is very difficult to be implemented, due differing structural context on the national level. All participants agreed that recruiting employers for expert panels is challenging, as employers (or their representative organizations) often do not see the immediate added value to their business and have to make special arrangements to attend meetings. In addition, they might also not experienced in QA in HEI. It was agreed that offering training to employers might be one way to address this issue.

Another point of discussion was the involvement of representatives of 'civil society', which might become more important as the 'societal dimension' becomes more prominent in



higher education and thus also in QA. It might be worthwhile to consider how to include this rather difficult to define group and to find structured ways to identify, motivate, integrate and substantially involve representatives from different players in this group.

Cross-border evaluation was also signaled as a relevant theme, although it has not been addressed in this study. In the future, cross border evaluations will also become more and more important to universities and employers. This kind of evaluation offers an opportunity to reach out to institutions, as they have a more natural link to employers through alumni networks and it will be easier to involve them. It was agreed that the inclusion of cross-border evaluations in future studies is a question to be taken for the future of TPG C on QA.

## 7. Main outcomes of the parallel sessions.

**The Belgium Flemish Community Co-chair** invited the speakers of parallel sessions of the previous day to summarize discussions in their groups.

**Maria Kelo** ENQA - in the sessions moderated by ENQA, the internal QA of the agencies themselves and the relationship between the agency and the ministry were discussed.

The group discussed the Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) mechanisms of agencies and tried to identify some good practices and common challenges. Different activities exist in different agencies and include one or more of the following: different surveys and other stakeholder feedback; internal meetings; action plans; specific IQA standards and their monitoring; etc. It is important to have structured and formalised IQA tools and processes and not only informal ones. This supports an “institutional memory” that does not depend on individuals and can lead to a more strategic and institutionalised approach to IQA.

IQA mechanisms should also to be evaluated from time to time to see which of them make sense and help to collect relevant feedback for improvement. Sometimes less is more, i.e. it is more important to do the right kind of activities than to do simply more of them. It is very important to ensure the ownership of the agency staff for the IQA mechanisms so that it does not become a box-ticking exercise, and to avoid IQA fatigue. For example, NVAO is trying to develop for their IQA system a similar appreciative approach as they have in place for the institutions.

The relationship between agencies and the respective ministry is also very important. Being independent does not mean existing in isolation or being detached. A good relationship requires trust and if there is trust, both sides are more willing to share information, which is for the benefit of the entire system. Establishing links of communication is also crucial. The agency can support the ministry with their input and expertise for example in discussions on reforms of the legal framework. All parties need to be involved in QA discussions nationally, as each one has its role to play in building and maintaining a good national QA system (also meaning that the ministry cannot withdraw from the discussions entirely).

It is important to build a good dialogue between the two in order to avoid big issues and misunderstandings arising. If then some issues arise, there is a common basis already and thus a solution can be found better and faster, as both sides already “speak the same

language”, at least to some extent. Involving the ministry also formally in the work of the agency can support such dialogue as long as the balance of powers within the agency bodies is assured.

**Jakub Grodecki** ESU – in the sessions moderated by ESU, the topics for discussion were of general approach to the entire topic of QA, with emphasis on teaching of academic staff in general and on whether there is an understanding of the Learning & Teaching idea in QA. The group also discussed the independence of academic staff versus Qualification procedures, whether they have the proper training and improving their understanding of the expectations in the assessing panels. The discussion on the topic was an open one.

The second topic was more related to procedural QA, focusing on the training of the experts of different stakeholder groups within the panels. The questions raised regarded the effectiveness of training the experts together or separately, and the benefits of combining both methodologies. The maintaining of the pool of experts was raised for discussion, considering that students, as part of the process, timewise, have their status only during the academic studies, and that there is a need to maintain the pool/network with experts from all stakeholder groups for longer periods of time. For many students this kind of stakeholder involvement is a first experience, so they should be well organised when participating in training. It was suggested that role play could be a good tool in preparing for stakeholder meetings. Training of the experts themselves as well as the way of communication between the experts was also discussed, with participants bringing ideas and good practice from their own national settings.

**Melinda Szabo** EQAR – discussions moderated by EQAR raised the themes of study programmes, how to prepare a programme or institutional review report and different approaches on tackling the related issues.

The group discussed how to introduce accreditation at the level of study programmes in a system that currently only uses institutional evaluations, so as to not overburden the higher education systems. They also considered what an in-depth programme evaluation would entail compared to a light programme evaluation. Most countries use a combined programme and institutional evaluation, either combining the two processes i.e. those that had institutional accreditation can have a light programme review approach like the Netherlands or are granted with the possibility to self-accredit their own programmes, like Germany. In other cases, the programme and institutional evaluation is completely independent from each other, as is the case in Georgia.

How to ensure the relevance of new study programmes, how they are meeting the needs of society and how to ensure they are of high quality was also considered. It's important to investigate the labour market needs (but also those of society) before the set-up of publicly funded programmes. This 'investigation' is in some countries done by field experts employed by the university, while the decision on whether the programme is indeed meeting the needs of the market is done by an independently set up body (i.e. Netherlands). In some other countries, in order to initiate new study programmes the university has to first seek and receive the approval of the institution in charge of aligning programmes to the national qualification framework and afterwards they may apply for accreditation.

In cases of a closure of a study programme, the university has to ensure that students may continue and finalise their studies in a different higher education institution. In some countries higher education institutions have to have cooperation with other universities to ensure that students will be able to enroll in a different higher education institution (should the study programme be closed down) and have the completed credits recognised. This is however difficult to ensure in small higher education systems, due to the limited capacity to absorb large number of students.

The design of accreditation reports was also discussed. Who should be considered as the main target group - is it the institution or the public at large? There also have to be processes in place that ensure the usefulness of such reports for both the university management and the larger audience. Some QA agencies designed their review report separately for two different target audiences; one large and comprehensive report is addressed to the faculty/ university management and a shorter more concise report is written in a simpler language for the public.

Considering the requirement of the ESG (2.6 Reporting), there exists a concern by the reviewed higher education institutions of accepting the publication of the larger and detailed report, for fear of being misunderstood by a less specialised audience. Programme level reports tend to be much more sensitive in nature due their closeness to the academics involved in teaching and learning and internal university competition. The group observed that the repercussions of a negative report or the negative review are differently construed depending on the consequences and the pressure they might exert on the higher education institution. This aspect should be considered in the design of review reports.

**Tia Loukkola** EUA – Discussions were focused on the topic of quality culture. A culture of quality is based on formal quality assurance processes as well as the individual and collective commitment to quality. A quality culture does not have one optimal definition because it is based on a process and not on a result. It was agreed that it is a lived experience and an institutional reality but is not limited to the quality of management nor does it only reflect the student experience. There are different quality cultures depending on the context. Discussions tackled the issue on an institutional level, but quality culture has a wider role to play than only within institutions.

Promoting a 'quality culture' is based on qualitative and expert mechanisms. For QAAs that want to promote 'culture of quality', it is necessary that they internally improve it themselves, so as to constitute an authority in this area, for e.g. universities. A prerequisite for a culture of quality within QA agencies and institutional management is the relevance of their QA processes. There should be a shared responsibility for establishing such a culture and it should become a part of an everyday institutional operations.

There are various possible ways to identify a culture of quality. A self-critical evaluation report, for example, can be revealing as to the internal culture of an institution. Such a report is not sufficient however as it is possible to hire external experts to write such a report. A site visit is therefore very important to confirm the analytical and critical capacity shown by the self-evaluation report/site visits. It was also agreed that quality culture needs time and maturity. Different quality cultures depend on the disciplinary context and bottom up/top down approach.

## **8. Discussion on further work of the Bologna Peer Support Group on QA.**

The group discussed the messages to be sent to the BICG and the BFUG for the future of the TPG C on QA.

The input of all the members on the discussion of the topic was considered crucial, and discussions focused on several topics of the work of the TPG C on QA, aiming to bring across a clear message to the BICG and BFUG.

One of the main topics raised for discussions regarded the current working method of the TPG C on QA. The chair asked whether the current structure and method were efficient for the work of the TPG C on QA and whether there is a necessity for meetings on such a large scale or if there is an overlap with other existing structures.

Participants discussed actively, emphasizing that although there are different QA arenas and structures, the specific structure of the TPG C on QA brings ministries and QA agencies together. There is a clear added value to have these entities combined, also in the future. Maybe adding smaller meetings on specific topics could also be useful – but in general, all group members should have the possibility to participate (i.e. plenary sessions). Furthermore, some members asked if more national stakeholders could be taken up in the composition of the TPG C on QA, e.g. employers. It should also be praised that the current work method allows participants easier ways to participate. It cuts a lot of national bureaucratic procedures compared to taking part in international conferences, etc.

The meetings are a sort of forum to debate and talk about elements on general level, without entering into details and specifications and being too process oriented. There might be a need to find a more balanced way to set the dates for the meeting. Participants had different ideas about this. One meeting every six months also keeps the attention of the participants.

Peer learning is very practical and important and the staff mobility project has also a clear added value. The dissemination of the outcomes in the national systems is important. Also, the reporting of countries towards other members of the group can be considered relevant.

The chair also asked input on the content of the meetings and the way of working with subthemes. In general the key elements were covered. However, other topics could be added and need further discussion in the future; cross border QA, stakeholders' engagement, quality culture, third role of university linked to QA, etc. A new mapping of topics should be done if the peer group continues its existence.

Several countries and stakeholder organisations have applied for further Erasmus KA3 projects in the field of QA.

The work of the TPG C on QA has been concrete, and the input was the same as well, enabling to foresee the future and what should be done. Hopefully the TPGs will continue, as the work started, should further be carried out.

## 9. Reporting of the Bologna Peer Support Group on QA to BFUG and EHEA ministers.

Mr. Patrick van den Bosch, the external evaluator of the project on the work of the TPG C on QA, reported his findings to the participants. The evaluation was carried out based on the surveys from the two previous meetings (not participating personally), reading of all the materials available, surveys filled, as well as the observation of the last meeting. Networking activities and group discussions were the most valuable activities carried out in the TPG C on QA meetings. The objectives are achieved without any doubt (the last meeting still to be done upon carrying out the analysis of the evaluation). It is very encouraging to see the increase in the number of participants. While in Tbilisi there were 17 countries and agencies presented, in the second meeting of TPG C on QA in Limasol the number raised to 56 participants representing TPG C on QA member countries and agencies, while the meeting in Ghent gathered 55 participants.

Information on the [EHEA web site](#) was very clear and provide useful information. Detailed minutes of the past meetings and all published information gave a clear information on the work of the TPG C on QA. The External evaluator congratulated the BFUG Secretariat on making available all the relevant documents on the EHEA web site. The external evaluator urged participants to respond to the ex post survey, to provide a comprehensive survey.

**Belgium Flemish Co-chair** represents the TPG C on QA co-chairs to the BICG. As such, the agreed report of the TPG C on QA was forwarded to the BFUG in its last meeting in Helsinki on 12-13 November 2019, as part of the BICG report and is available on the EHEA web site. Messages received from the BICG and BFUG were introduced to participants on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the meeting in Ghent.

## 10. Wrap up and way forward

TPG C on QA Co-Chairs took the opportunity to thank all participants of the meeting as well as missing members of TPG C on QA for their active participation and feedback to the work of the group, emphasizing that the topic of QA will remain of importance also in the future and hoping that every participant has used the platform of the work of the TPG C on QA to make some positive difference for everyone. The materials of the meeting, besides being uploaded to the EHEA web site, will be sent to all participants via e-mail.